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GOVERNMENT AIDS STOCKMEN  
IN POISONING WOLVES AND COYOTES

Carefully planned campaigns covering tens of thousands of square miles of range in the Western States chiefly Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, are now being organized to poison wolves and coyotes in the annual winter drive conducted by the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, and its cooperators among State officials and stock growers. Depredations of these pests among herds and flocks of the range country are costing stockmen millions of dollars every year. Reports to the department from its agents in the field state that the preliminaries have been about completed in some sections and are progressing rapidly in others, and that the campaign, from Canada to Mexico, will soon be in full swing. These campaigns are planned to secure maximum results and at the same time provide all possible safeguards to live stock, valuable dogs and fur-bearing animals.

Poison for the coyotes is put out under the supervision of the department experts. The work is done with careful discrimination, using thoroughly tested plans and methods, and whole communities are organized for the effort. These local organizations often embrace areas of great size; for instance, one community alone in Idaho, where the work is at present being actively prosecuted, covers a mountain valley more than 100 miles long and from 10 to 30 miles wide. In the southern portion of that State poisoning operations will be organized from the Oregon line to Wyoming.

It is estimated that approximately 150,000 coyotes fell before the poison campaigns during the past six years. This estimate is regarded as conservative; there is no possible means of determining the exact number. For weeks and months after the campaign is over stockmen discover the carcasses of the animals thus disposed of. As it is estimated that each coyote destroys \$50 worth of stock every year the total damage thus averted, based on a one year calculation, reaches the imposing aggregate of \$7,500,000. The work this year will be more extensive and more thoroughly organized than at any time in the past.

Winter, when the stock comes in from the summer range, is the time selected for the strongest drive. Then it is that the coyote hungers, and the summer pasture is free for the Government agent to work without danger to grazing stock. There are no sheep or cattle to fall victim to the poison, no sheep dogs to eat it and crawl away to die--only the four-footed bandits of plain and mountain.

#### How the Poison is Placed

Fifty thousand choice morsels of meat, cut in convenient size for gobbling up by a hungry sheep killer, each tiny morsel with its portion of poison tucked safely away inside, tasteless and effective! That is the quantity for Nevada alone. Seventy-five thousand mouthfuls of meat and poison for New Mexico! One hundred and ninety-two thousand for Arizona! Half a million for Utah! Thus is the table of the western pasture prepared for the slinking bandit who prowls and preys wherever he may, skulking by day and slaying by night the finest and choicest of the farmers' lambs and sheep and calves.

For weeks before the actual baiting begins the stockmen are enlisted and organized and taught the part they must play. Each community has its own leaders in the work. Associations of stockmen join in. Independent ranchmen and sheep owners help swell the total. The cowpuncher gives a hand. The sheepherder locks up his dogs and helps out. The whole community is mobilized preparatory to spreading the message of death against the natural enemy of the community's economic life.

When the range and mountains are entirely free of sheep and cattle the work is actually begun. Sometimes it is necessary to train the coyote into going for his food to certain free lunch counters which later are converted into deathstands, so far as the coyote is concerned. In these instances a bait free from poison, generally fresh meat, is planted. When the coyotes are accustomed to come here for their food, and the tracks in the mud or the snow show that the pests are plentiful, the approaches to the feeding station are provided with delectable poison sandwiches of freshly killed meat, juicy and inviting, just the size to fit a cruel mouth and slavering jaws. These little sandwiches, cut about an inch square and from a quarter to a half inch thick, are planted in the favorite paths which the coyotes take in approaching the bait.

Each of these morsels of meat is sliced down the middle. The poison is inserted and then the sandwich is complete. The coyote tastes only the meat and doesn't know that he has taken poison till a message from his

interior department conveys the fatal tidings.

Sometimes when a stand is far up a mountainside or in the high hills where the snow comes early and stays late, or in country which for any reason soon becomes inaccessible for the stockman to visit, a quarter or a half of a carcass of fresh meat is placed there for the animals, loaded with many balls of fat sunk into the flesh and covered. Each ball of fat carries <sup>its</sup> message of death, and the end comes quickly to the coyote which takes one.

Painstaking care is exercised to see that the poison reaches only the coyote, wolf or other stock destroyer. When tracks or other sign show that valuable fur-bearing animals are coming to the unpoisoned fresh-meat station the poison plan is modified, for the Government would rather kill the coyotes by rifle or trap, if necessary than poison valuable species. The sheep herders chain or lock up their dogs, since the most valuable sheep dog may fall a victim to the poisoned bait as quickly as a coyote. The sheep and cattle themselves are far from the scene, safe.

When the snows melt and the ranges are green again, and the herds and herders once more are back on the summer pasture, the story of the winter campaign is told in carcasses lying here and there over the range. They are the carcasses of the coyotes which for going once too often to the bait will slay no more.